DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 424 CG 030 657

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TITLE Culturally Competent Counselors: A Self-Assessment Rubric.
PUB DATE 2001-02-00
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association (Hilton Head, SC, February 16, 2001).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affective Behavior; Cognitive Ability; Counselor Client Relationship; *Counselor Training; *Course Objectives; Cultural Differences; Cultural Pluralism; *Graduate Students; Higher Education; Journal Writing; Racial Identification; Scoring Rubrics; Self Concept; Social Cognition
IDENTIFIERS United States (Midwest)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines graduate counseling students' affective and cognitive development related to cultural competence. Counseling Process and Cross Cultural Counseling, two required courses in a master's degree program at a regional university in the Midwest, were designed to provide a knowledge-base about cultural differences and to project how these differences would influence the counseling relationship. A rubric was developed for assessing racial and cultural identity growth, using the Racial-Cultural Identity Development Mode. Journaling was used to help students define their cultural attitudes and identify areas of professional development related to increases in self-awareness, gaining cultural knowledge, and developing counseling interventions. Since discussion of race, culture, gender, and other emotionally charged topics are subject to social desirability efforts, the nonreactive nature of this assessment rubric is very important. This type of assessment is critical in order to assist counselors in enhancing their skills in cross-cultural work with clients. Based upon feedback, sentence stems reflecting each level of development will be modified to increase the rubric's theoretical accuracy. Ultimately, the rubric can be useful in demonstrating a user's progression through stages of cultural identity development. (Contains 1 table and 14 references.) (JDM)

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ED 449 424

Culturally Competent Counselors: A Self-Assessment Rubric

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Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association, February 16, 2001, Hilton Head, South Carolina

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Culturally Competent Counselors: A Self Assessment Rubric

A current thrust in the training of professional counselors is the need to develop counselors who are culturally competent. Ethnic minorities underutilize counseling services in all of the areas for which counselor educators train practitioners: schools, colleges, and community agencies. A priority in our graduate program is to examine and evaluate the curricular changes required to meet this need. Our goal is to infuse knowledge about diversity throughout the curriculum and to evaluate the change in students' awareness and skills.

In responding to these professional mandates and training goals, we have taken our direction from the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Arredondo, P., Toporek, R., Brown, S.P., Jones, J., Locke, D.C., Sanchez, J., & Stadler, H., 1996), and the grounding research and theoretical works of Helms (1990) and Sue (1999). The literature strongly supports the centrality of counselors' awareness of their own cultural worldview in the development of cultural competency. It is posited that the counselor's recognition of the influence of his/her culture on how clients and interventions are framed is essential to developing effective helping skills for counseling the culturally different. The authors also contend counselors must be aware of the inherent cultural bias in traditional counseling theories, the influence of culture on the client, as well as the influence of historical relationships between the client and counselor's respective racial/cultural groups. A growing body of research suggests the importance of addressing racial and cultural identity development (RCID) issues in training counselors for cultural competency (Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996; Holcomb-McCoy, C.C., 2000; Ottavi, T. M., Pope-Davis, D.B., & Dings, J.G., 1994; Vinson, T.S. & Neimer, 2000).

Helms (1990,1996) describes six levels of White racial identity development. Levels 1-3 and 5-6 loosely parallel Sue's (1999) RCID model. Helms contends that individuals move through the levels, called statuses, in a non-linear fashion, more or less seeking resolution. Status 1 is called Contact. In this status the individual accepts and is satisfied with the status quo, is likely to believe strongly in the meritocracy and individual responsibility, and to be ignorant of racial privilege. In Status 2, Disintegration, the individual grapples with cognitive dissonance and anxiety in the recognition of racial concerns and incongruous personal or professional beliefs and

practices. During Reintegration, Status 3, one's own racial group is highly valued, and conversely, little tolerance is demonstrated for racial/cultural differences. The fourth stage is representative of what Rigley (1995) describes as damaging, unintentional racism in mental health care. In Status 4, Pseudo-independence, the individual identifies and aligns with her/his group, demonstrates tolerance for racial/cultural differences, and expresses the desire to help racially/culturally different others. During Status 5, Immersion-Emersion, an individual examines "White privilege" and racism, redefines whiteness, and may expand helping roles to include advocacy. The central issue for individuals in Status 6 is Autonomy. In this status one is able to embrace her/his whiteness and an antiracist identity simultaneously, renouncing racism and its privileges.

Helms (1990, 1996) depicted the racial identity development for people of color in five statuses. Status 1, 2, and 3: Conformity, Dissonance, and Immersion-Emersion parallel Status 1, 2, and 3 of the White model concerning thinking and behavior related to racial bias towards people of color. In Status 4, Internalization, she notes that people of color relate positively to their own group, and objectively to members of other cultural groups on an individual basis. Finally, in Status 5, people of color develop empathy for other oppressed groups.

Following this model of RCID, research examining racial identity development consistently indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between counselors' RCID and cultural competency. Ottavi, Pope-Davis, and Dings (1994) found that White racial identity development was important to the development of cultural competency. They determined that RDIC accounted for variance in self-reported multicultural competency beyond the influence of demographic, educational, and clinical factors. Both pseudo-independence (status 4) and autonomy (status 6) accounted for significant incremental variance in multicultural competency. The authors noted that, "results support the often-cited belief that student's attitudes and beliefs about racial issues are an important part of multicultural competency development" (p. 153). These authors also suggested that future studies add observational data to self-reports in the examination of multicultural competency.

In a study involving White graduate students, Brown, Parham, and Yonker (1996) found that training influenced the RCID of trainees. Students' abilities to accept racial differences, appreciate the impact of race on people of color, and demonstrate less racist behavior were enhanced by training. This study also indicated that gender influenced identity attitudes; with women showing a greater gain in Pseudo-Independence (status 4)

and men in autonomy (status 6). This evidence is of particular concern to counselor educators because the majority of students in graduate training programs are women (Axelson, 1993). In a recent study, Holcomb-McCoy's (2000) findings were consistent with Brown, Parham, and Yonker, indicating that RCID is a critical platform for developing cultural competency. In a factor analysis of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies, Holcomb-McCoy's (2000) separated radial cultural identity (RCID) from awareness, and identified a strong, positive correlation between RCID and self-reported cultural competency. She also indicated a need for measures of cultural competency other than self-report surveys.

Vinson and Neimer (2000) expanded on the previous studies by including new doctoral students (65 White and 22 students of color) in a study that evaluated the relationship between racial identity development and cultural competency. Their results add to the growing evidence that RCID is an indispensable component in training counselor for cultural competency (Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994). This study also advanced the previous work by including students of color and gathering baseline data at the beginning of training. The proportion of men (39%) and women (61%), as well as White (75%) and students of color (25%); while reported as representative of their program's population, was somewhat more racially diverse than the population of mental health are professionals (Axelson, 1993). Concordant with prior research, Vinson and Neimer found that higher levels of racial identity were associated with higher levels of multicultural competency for both White students and students of color. They argue that even with the use of different instrumentation, study findings are consistent with prior investigations, and therefore should be considered "robust" (p. 189). However, they note that confounding between multicultural counseling competence and overall counseling competence may exist, and they encourage questioning the honesty and social desirability of responses in the self-reports. Vinson and Neimer clearly support Ottavi, Pope-Davis, and Dings' (1994) proposal that racial identity development be targeted as a fundamental component of multicultural counselor training; and further argue the need for research that addresses training implications.

Method

Graduate counseling students' affective and cognitive development related to cultural competence was examined. This study involved two required core courses in a master's degree program at a regional university in the Midwest: Counseling Process and Cross Cultural Counseling. The Counseling Process course is designed to develop

students' skills in carrying out a counseling process with clients. Ways in which client and counselor differences affect the counseling process are considered. The Cross-Cultural class focuses on understanding how diversity influences the counseling relationship. Students completing this course are expected to have a knowledge base about cultures different from their own and how these differences are manifest in, as well as influence, the counseling relationship. Both courses are taught using a combination of lecture and experiential learning methods.

For one semester in both classes, students were required to maintain reflective journals that were used as self-assessment tools for examining their abilities to handle the dynamics of difference influenced by racial and cultural diversity. They were also required to identify new learning or understanding that resulted from these activities. In their journals students responded to questions that focused on their attitudes and beliefs about difference; how these attitudes and beliefs changed as a result of course content and experiences; and whether students could assess how their attitudes and beliefs relate to the development of culturally competent counseling skills.

Current instrumentation for assessing counselor awareness focuses primarily on self-report and/or responses to hypothetical or simulated case problems. These methodologies are keenly sensitive to the influences of social desirability and political correctness. Nonreactive measures, on the other hand, minimize such influences (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Sechrest, & Grove, 1981). Using nonreactive measurement in conjunction with other methods, such as surveys and interviews, serves to increase the validity of the data. The primary goals of this project were:

1. To develop a rubric for assessing racial cultural identity growth.
2. To provide a personal and meaningful paradigm for the trainee to explore racial cultural identity development and a format for self-assessment.
3. To develop instrumentation that is resistant to the influences of social desirability and political correctness.

The Racial-Cultural Identity Development Model (Sue & Sue, 1990) provided the foundation for developing this assessment rubric. Descriptors for each of the five levels of development provided the first level of analysis for the student journals. For example, Level I is described as the inability to recognize culturally distinct norms and values. Differences are romanticized as well as diminished and spoken of using cliches. Cognitions are general and externalized. Journals were examined for examples of statements that fit this description. From this examination sentence stems emerged.

Descriptors for each of the five levels and representative sentence stems are presented in Table 1. RCID Classroom Assessment Rubric.

Discussion

Journaling enhanced the counseling students' abilities to: (a) define their own cultural attitudes, values, and biases, (b) articulate the potential influence of those attitudes, values, and biases on the cross-cultural counseling relationship, and (c) conceptualize and identify areas for professional development related to increasing self-awareness, gaining cultural knowledge, and developing counseling interventions. The rubric provides a qualitative tool for assessment of cultural identity development. Since discussions of race, culture, gender, and other emotionally charged topics are subject to social desirability effects, the nonreactive nature of this assessment rubric is very important. This type of assessment is critical in order to assist counselors in enhancing their skills in cross-cultural work with clients.

In the next phase of this project, the rubric will be refined to make it more "user-friendly" and to align it more closely with theory. Students will use the rubric to analyze their own reflective journals, thus assessing their cultural identity development. Feedback from this process will provide information on aspects of the rubric that are easy or difficult to use. Students' analysis of anonymous journals can provide comparisons between the instrument's use for self-assessment and assessment of others. Based on feedback obtained in this phase, sentence stems reflecting each level of development will be modified to increase the rubric's theoretical accuracy. Ultimately the rubric will be useful in demonstrating a user's progression through stages of cultural identity development.

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TABLE 1

RCID CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

RCID Level Descriptions and Sample Sentence Stems				
One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Inability to recognize culturally distinct norms and values. Differences are romanticized as well as diminished and spoken of using cliches. Cognitions are general and externalized.	Conflict between wanting to uphold traditional norms and values and wanting to uphold humanitarian values. Willingness to articulate feelings of guilt, anger, shame, and depression.	Recognition of traditional stereotypes, exploration to better understand multicultural paradigms, examination of incongruities related to historical/social political realities. Cognitions are owned and internalized.	Personally resolved and reconstructed worldview that results in reduced conflict and defensiveness. Evidence of the struggle to align cognition with affect.	Comfortable with multiple cultural identities. Explores issues of racism and personal responsibility without defensiveness. No longer fearful, intimidated, or uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race and free to actively seek out multicultural experiences
I don't see color I treat everyone the same All people are ... I never thought of myself as a ... If only they ... Everyone experiences discrimination	I feel bad that.. I'm mad about... I'm so sick of this ... I'm only one person, there's nothing I can do I'm so sorry that... I was taught that.. but now I know that I have to... I know that I must...	It could be cultural ... I never considered that... I thought I was.. but... I'm so glad I realized that... It's hard to understand how ...	I'm looking forward to learning more about... I'd like to explore ... My goal is ... I now see the need for... I'm more open to... I now believe I can... I'm excited about...	What I have come to recognize about.. Privilege Racism Sexism Classism Homophobia I gain/am rewarded through multicultural experiences I have grown to enjoy many differences